

SPRECHSTIMME: HISTORICAL AND
VOCAL ASPECTS OF A DRAMATIC
MUSICAL TECHNIQUE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
SPRECHSTIMME:
HISTORICAL AND VOCAL ASPECTS OF A
DRAMATIC MUSICAL TECHNIQUE
by
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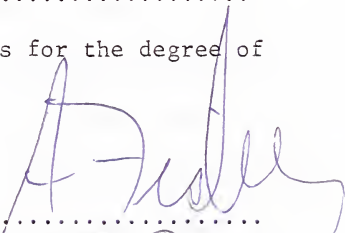
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ABSTRACT

The integrity of language, its comprehensibility, accent, and the meaning it conveys to a listener has always been a concern among composers and performers of music. The spoken word, because it best conveys the language to the listener has been of special concern. Ways of amalgamating spoken language and music can be found, varying from free speech with musical interludes--as with incidental music and early melodrama--to extremely articulated singing, referred to in German as *Sprechgesang*. Some composers, in response to the search for an intermediate area between speech and song, developed what is commonly referred to as *Sprechstimme*. This device is the direct descendant of an established tradition of German melodrama. The single most important work utilizing *Sprechstimme* is "Pierrot Lunaire" by Arnold Schoenberg. This work is a precisely notated score demanding a highly inflected style of recitation and carefully articulated rhythms, bringing the speaking and singing voice into close approximation while retaining speech as the basic means of production. Notation for inflected spoken voice gradually evolved from text printed within breaks in staff notation to *Sprechnoten*, the symbols favored in most twentieth century scores. Composers continue to utilize *Sprechstimme* when they require a vocal production between speech and song.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to investigate a specific vocal technique--*Sprechstimme*. The investigation will include its historical background, analysis of use in three vocal works, and a consideration of interpretational problems involved in delivery.

Throughout the history of vocal writing, the influence of individual performers has been of great importance in the creation of specific works. This was also the case with the most celebrated work utilizing *Sprechstimme*--"Pierrot Lunaire" by Arnold Schoenberg. Though this work was created for an individual, it occupies a place different from most vocal pieces written for specific performers. The commission of "Pierrot Lunaire" was not from a singer, but an actress. Therefore the resulting work and its accepted form of interpretation did not arise from the traditions of song, but from those of speech, particularly theatrical recitation. This style of recitation in the hands of a master musician like Schoenberg took on musical dimensions never before imagined and still not surpassed.

Because of theatrical influences on "Pierrot Lunaire", the historical background of the melodrama is relevant to an understanding of *Sprechstimme*. A combination of musical (singing) and theatrical (speaking) considerations has forged a unique place for *Sprechstimme* in contemporary music. Since it incorporates many elements of both singing and speech, it is exclusively neither. The realization of this uniqueness in performance has given rise to

questions of interpretation, many of which remain unanswered.

It is hoped that by providing a historical/technical perspective for *Sprechstimme*, a clearer concept of what has long been an area of confusion will emerge.

Chapter 1

DEFINITION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The initial problem in any consideration of *Sprechstimme* is the establishment of a clear definition. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians does not define *Sprechstimme* per se, but refers to *Sprechgesang*, which is defined as a "type of vocal enunciation intermediate between speech and song."¹ The question arises whether *Sprechgesang* and *Sprechstimme* are indeed the same thing. Research into many sources indicates that they are not, and each requires its own definition.

Sprechgesang is highly articulated singing with clearly pronounced and differentiated vowels and consonants. Notes are sung exactly as notated for pitch and duration. Ralph Wood refers to a clarification of *Sprechgesang* by Percy Scholes: "*Sprechgesang* means a 'parlando' manner of singing, and indeed is translated in standard dictionaries as 'recitative'."² Edward Kravitt describes *Sprechgesang* as a "wordbound style of singing, notable for its crisp and chiseled enunciation."³ Later in the same article he speaks of "immaculately clear and chiseled pronunciation...in which the attention that singers paid to speechlike clarity in singing bordered upon being an obsession."⁴

The literal meaning of *Sprechstimme* is speaking voice, but when applied to actual musical performance, it becomes more than that. Many definitions of *Sprechstimme* are available, but no single definition incorporates the various factors of which it is

comprised. By combining parts of a number of these definitions the following has been arrived at and will be used as the meaning of *Sprechstimme* throughout this paper.

Sprechstimme is a technique of vocal performance that lies between speech and song. It consists of recitation on higher or lower pitches, the contours and rhythms of which are determined by the composer.⁵

Though the incorporation of the speaking voice in music is often thought of as a recent convention, and certainly relatively precise notation of spoken inflection is a product of the twentieth century, earlier vocal literature contains a large amount of repertoire involving speaking. Nearly all of this repertoire is of a melodramatic nature and leads directly to the two works most often mentioned in conjunction with *Sprechstimme*. The first of these works is "Königskinder", a melodrama by Engelbert Humperdinck written in 1897. The second is "Pierrot Lunaire" by Arnold Schoenberg, a cycle of twenty-one short melodramas. These two works are the historical results of a tradition of melodrama that had been developing for over a century before they were written.

Melodrama is defined as a "kind of drama, or a part of a drama, in which the action is carried forward by the protagonist speaking in the pauses of, and later commonly during, a musical accompaniment."⁶ It was conceived as a genre by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1770. Rousseau was concerned with the fundamental problem of uniting the voice with music so that the integrity of the language was not sacrificed. Much of his concern arose from the borrowing of Italian musical styles by the French, resulting in musical per-

formances in French which were entirely unsuited to that language. His solution appeared with the work Pygmalion using his own text and music composed by Horace Coignet. The work was essentially a play with an Italian style overture and twenty-six very short musical interludes which were to interpret the action preceding them and prepare the action to follow. The interludes also served as the background for pantomimic action, included to further the dramatic action.⁷ Though Rousseau's melodrama created a sensation at the time, its period of vogue was short-lived, lasting only a few years. However, its influence was felt in many aspects of theatre. Regarding the use of the voice, it had two important results. The first was the development of *recitativ parl  *, a new vocal style which insured clarity of text. The second was the interest it raised among composers in Germany who were to bring melodramatic vocal writing to its highest point.

Rousseau's concern regarding the integrity of the French language was the primary cause for his development of what he termed *recitativ parl  *. This type of recitation allowed free use of the accents within the language, while adding poetic accent and the rhythmic accents of music. *Recitativ parl  * incorporated all of these accents in its delivery. Rousseau expressed some of his views on speaking and music in an article written in 1775 entitled "Observations sur l'Alceste de M. Gl  ck."

It is a large and noble problem to resolve, how to determine at just what point one should sing the language and speak the music...The oral accent by itself is without doubt a great force, but it is only so in declamation; this force is independent of all music; with this accent alone one can comprehend a great tragedy, but not a great opera.⁸

Under the influence of Rousseau, the concept of melodrama was taken up by a number of German composers, most notably Georg Benda (1722-1795). His melodrama Ariadne auf Naxos established the form that would become typical of eighteenth century German melodrama. It began with an overture which was followed by one or more monologues. These were not in the French style of Rousseau, where the speeches were interspersed with pieces of music, but rather were short sections of music between which speaking occurred. The musical sections were used to portray the emotions of the characters both prior to and following their speaking, but were also used to restate and introduce motives associated with their thoughts and actions, thus unifying the work on a musical-motivic level. In moments of great emotion and importance the speaking voice continued over the music.

By 1800 the melodrama as an independent genre had fallen from favor among both composers and audiences. By that time, however, melodramatic elements were firmly entrenched in musical works for the stage and the success of works like Ariadne auf Naxos had influenced many composers, inspiring them to write works incorporating the speaking voice. The speaking voice was used either in brief melodramas included in incidental music, in recitations with piano accompaniment, or in segments of operas where it was employed to

enhance the drama or achieve a specific dramatic effect. A chronological list of some of these works and their composers serves to demonstrate the continued interest in the speaking voice.

Mozart: Zaide (unfinished opera) 1779.

Beethoven: Fidelio (opera) 1805; "Die Ruinen von Athen" (incidental music) 1811.

Schubert: "Die Zauberharfe" (stage music) 1820.

Weber: Preciosa (play with music) 1821; Der Freischütz (opera) 1821.

Mendelssohn: "Antigone" (incidental music) 1841.

Schumann: "Die Flüchtlinge" (recitation) 1852.

Liszt: "Lenore" (recitation) 1858.

Melodrama as used in these works falls into three categories:

1) declamation during pauses in the music; 2) declamation on fermatas and/or tremolos; 3) rhythmic, musical declamation stretched and developed within the musical phrase.⁹ These were used in instances where composers felt the emotional content could not be adequately expressed in singing, or where the action was controlled by an external force, such as the supernatural.¹⁰

Melodramatic writing in the nineteenth century increasingly favored the third category of declamation. A familiar example is the Wolf's Glen scene from Der Freischütz. Incorporating all three types of melodramatic writing in a musical and visual attempt to re-create the aura of the powers of darkness, it is one of the most effective examples of melodramatic writing in German Romantic opera.

Another less familiar example is Schumann's recitation, "Die Fluchtlinge." Here the interjections of the reciter are indicated at precise metrical moments.



Example 1. Robert Schumann, "Die Fluchtlinge," Op. 122b, mm. 10-17.

With the increased desire for realism and naturalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century, a new interest was shown in melodrama by composers, among whom were Max von Schillings and Richard Strauss.¹¹ A primary factor in this renewed interest was the speaking technique developed by actors of the period. An extension of declamatory techniques, their production involved a combination of singing and speaking which gave the voices remarkable interpretive abilities.¹²

Often referred to as "elevated speech" or "intensified speech," the recitation of these actors was very different from that employed by actors of today.¹³ A description of this type of speech is given by E. F. Kravitt in an article on late Romantic melodrama,

in which he discusses one of the rare recordings in existence.

To create the effect of elevated speech Wüllner [a noted actor at the turn of the century] employed the various gradations that are transitional between speaking and singing. He sought in these several ways to bridge the gap between the spoken and sung word: by applying portamentos to key words; by sustaining and accenting their vowels quantitatively; by adopting a variety of subtle voice inflections; by speaking upon actual pitches, sometimes to the contour of the melody in the music and, curiously enough, through full-throated singing.¹⁴

A frequently used element of elevated speech was the literal interpretation of certain words. Kravitt describes Wüllner's recitation of the words *schluchzen und weinen* as being literally sobbing and weeping. Still another element of this speech style was the accentuation of key words or phrases not only through dynamic change but through the utilization of pitch. One of the leading reciters at the turn of the century, Ernst von Possart, developed a speaking range encompassing nearly three octaves.¹⁵

Elevated speech was a refinement of accepted declamatory procedures, a discussion of which can be found in Die Musikalische Deklamation by Wilhelm Kienzl. One section of the book is a long and exacting list of the responsibilities of the performer--as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago. Above all the performer must clearly and fully understand the text. Consonants must be precise at all times so unconscious modification of a hard consonant to a soft consonant does not detract from the clarity of the language. The consonants must be as short and articulate as possible around the vowel, which carries the tone. The performer must be aware of root-syllables so the meaning of the words is not

altered by improper elision. The performer must be able to understand the musical setting of the text in order to determine whether disparate elements of melody, rhythm and harmony exist that could result in corruption of the text: if so it is the performer's responsibility to rectify these errors as much as possible by modifying syllabic accents. Phrases should flow one into the other, which requires a very subtle rhythmic overlapping of phrase endings and beginnings. Well-planned breathing is a must so it does not disrupt phrase continuity or break up the phrase even where numerous rests are present. In this regard the performer must always consider the ear of the listener. For example, if the phrase ends, regardless of length, the illusion of breathing should be given. If the phrase should carry beyond where the listener anticipates a break, the breath must occur elsewhere--preventing an early phrase ending--or so silently and quickly that it passes unnoticed aurally and visually.¹⁶

The necessity of these requirements on the part of the reciter is illuminated in an early edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

The difficulty of modulating the voice judiciously in music of this description (melodrama) is, indeed, almost insuperable. The general temptation is to let it glide, insensibly, into some note sounded by the orchestra; in which case the effect produced resembles that of a Recitative, sung hideously out of tune.¹⁷

With such requirements at hand, it is small wonder that Kienzl wrote that he often heard "amateurs remark that one cannot hold the music and speech in melodrama synchronously in place."¹⁸

Synchronization of music and words in melodrama has been a problem from its outset. In the older style of melodrama--that of Rousseau--the recitation took place between sections of the music, allowing the reciter to take his own time and deal exclusively with word accent and enunciation. As the genre developed, more instances occurred where the voice continued over the music. It is these excerpts that cause the more complex interpretive problems.

A case in point is shown in Example 2, an excerpt from Georg Benda's Ariadne auf Naxos.

Example 2. Georg Benda, "la mort d'Ariadne," from Ariadne auf Naxos. in J. Van der Veen, Le Melodrame Musical de Rousseau au Romantisme. Example XIV, p. 142.

Two common types of notation are seen. The first (A) places the text in a blank space in the staff notation. The second (B) places the text above the music that it is to encompass. In this second case the reciter has no alternative but to complete the recitation in the designated time, as the composer has subdivided each beat into sixteenth notes, written a steady rhythmic figure in the bass and placed it all within a repeated section. The first measure of (B) allows a number of interpretations, all acceptable depending upon the meaning of the text that the reciter wishes to convey. Several of these choices are shown in Example 3, each of which would stress different words in the text to different degrees.

nicht die-ses En-de, nicht die-ses Schmach, nicht dies
 die-ses En-de, nicht die-ses Schmach,
 nicht dieses En-de, nicht dieses Schmach,
 nicht dieses En-de, nicht dieses Schmach,

Example 3. Metrical word-stress in an excerpt from Georg Benda's Ariadne auf Naxos.

The third phrase, *nicht dies Grab in diesen Wellen hab ich um dich verdient*, has one basic interpretation: *nicht dies / Grab in diesen Wellen hab ich um / dich verdient*, with the underlined syllables receiving the major accents. Because of its textual importance, *Grab* should receive as strong an accent as possible. To use

the metrical accents of the music as a means of intensifying the word stress, *Grab* should fall on beat one. It is a simple enough task to place *Grab* on the first beat of the bar, but then the performer encounters a dilemma--how to treat the vowel and final consonant of *Grab*. Richard Wagner provides the following directive concerning German pronunciation in cases like this.

The singer, who has to get the full tone out of the vowel, is acutely sensitive to the difference between the effects of energetic consonants--such as K, R, P, T--or indeed, strengthened ones--such as Sch, Sp, St, Pr--and softer, weak ones--such as G, L, B, D--upon the open sound. A strengthened terminal--nd, rt, st, ft--so definitely lays down the nature and duration of the vowel's utterance, that it downright insists on the latter's sounding brief and brisk.¹⁹

In the case of the word *Grab*, the ending consonant sound 'p' requires that the vowel be shortened as well. The reciter has several options open to him, all of which require modification of the basic pronunciation of the word. The vowel of *Grab* can be stretched, which changes the basic pronunciation of the word. The vowel and ending consonant can be shortened, as they should be, and the next three syllables (*in diesen*) extended. This would change the accent of the words and detract from the key words in the phrase--*Grab* and *Wellen*. The vowel and ending consonant may be shortened and a rest interjected before *in diesen*, changing the meaning and comprehension of the phrase. The reciter may choose to utilize a reiterated vowel accent, initially lengthening the vowel, quickly rearticulating the vowel at the necessary metrical point and putting on the shortened consonant ending.²⁰ Unfortun-

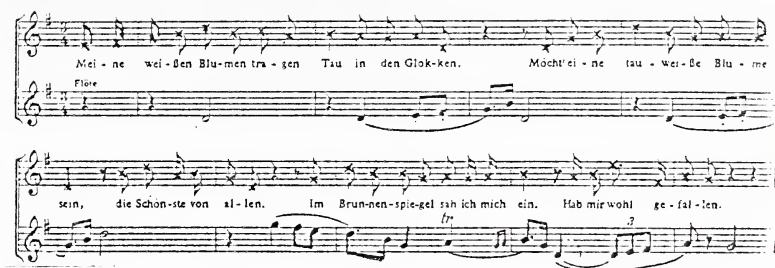
ately, this type of problem was often considered too difficult to deal with and the reciters of the day would speak a-rhythmically, thus altering the composer's intentions.

In order to clarify synchronization problems such as the one outlined above, composers chose to notate recitation in different ways, several of which have been seen in Examples 1 and 2. Liszt, for his recitation "Lenore" used repeat signs around a number of bars with the instruction that "the measures that are marked |: :| may be repeated several times, according to necessity, in order to bring the music into agreement with the declamation."²¹ Some composers wrote the metrical notation of the words exactly as they wanted it above the corresponding measures of music.²²



Example 4. Max von Schillings, "Das Hexenlied," mm. 189-191 in Edward F. Kravitt, "The Joining of Words and Music in Late Romantic Melodrama." Musical Quarterly 62:584.

The most exacting and daring notation for recitation appeared in Königskinder by Engelbert Humperdinck.²³



Example 5. Engelbert Humperdinck, *Königskinder*. Piano reduction by Max Brockhaus, Leipzig 1897, p. 3, in Rudolf Stephan, "Zur jüngsten Geschichte des Melodrams," *AMW* 17:184.

The reasoning behind this innovative notation, a complete description of the notation and performance instructions are provided in Wolfram Humperdinck's biography of his father, Engelbert.

He [Humperdinck] desired a type of notation that could convey by sight the intermediate area between singing and speaking: the *Sprechnote*. In place of the round note-head he placed a cross (x), constructing so to speak, a pitch-skeleton, determining the relative pitch of the speaking tone to the accompaniment, but maintaining the common notation for the rhythm. Without actually aiming at a singing speech, he determined the picture of a speech-melody (*Sprachmelodie*), in which the recitation can freely be made one's own, only it must maintain the obligation to the accompanying melody, and therefore it received the designation *gebundenes Melodrama* (bound melodrama). Humperdinck set out the following direction: "the \times notes do not in general give the absolute pitches, but rather the relative ones: the line of rising and falling of the voice. The more tone the latter assumes, the more it should approximate the prescribed pitches and thereby will not become dissonant; the more the dry speaking-tone is approached, the more can one deviate from the directions of the composer. Over the degree of tone naturally only the peculiar style of execution can be determined as well as the character of the place in question." Humperdinck was especially concerned that the speaker be permitted enough freedom, so he would not have to hold slavishly to the notation; the most important point being, that the player think and feel musically.²⁴

"Königskinder" was later rewritten by the composer as an opera, due in great part to the difficulty of finding performers willing and/or able to cope with the demands of the *Sprechnoten*.²⁵ It is the concepts Humperdinck brought forth in the melodramatic version of "Königskinder" that mark a turning point in music for the voice. This work helped to reestablish a popular acceptance of melodrama, reinforcing the work of Richard Strauss and Max von Schillings and leading to that of Arnold Schoenberg. It brought forward the concept of *Sprachmelodie* to be taken up by Schoenberg and his students. It created a new style of melodrama, *gebundenes Melodrama*, where the composer had greater influence on the final product and the performer a greater obligation to follow his directions. Finally, it created a type of notation, *Sprechnoten*, that would eventually find its way into common usage and "convey by sight the intermediate area between singing and speaking."²⁶

Chapter 2

"PIERROT LUNAIRE": *SPRECHSTIMME* AS AN INDEPENDENT VOCAL DEVICE

The most rigorous use of the speaking voice in a musical context is found in the work of Arnold Schoenberg. His first use of the speaking voice was in the reciter's (*Sprecher*) role of Gurrelieder where he used a notation similar to that of Humperdinck in Königskinder. Ten years later he composed "Dreimal Sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds Pierrot Lunaire", the single most important work for the speaking voice in the vocal repertoire.

"Pierrot Lunaire" is a series of twenty-one short melodramas set for *Sprechstimme* (speaking-voice), piano, flute (also piccolo), clarinet (also bass clarinet), violin (also viola) and cello. Commissioned by an actress, Madame Albertine Zehme, the work was originally to be a series of recitations with piano accompaniment. Schoenberg, in the course of composing "Pierrot Lunaire", progressively added more instruments until the work finally attained its present form.

The background of "Pierrot Lunaire" is as fascinating as the music itself and helps a great deal in understanding the work. Pierrot was one of the Italian *Commedia dell-Arte* characters of pantomime and puppet shows. As with many theatrical characters, he was given a unique personification by an individual, the French actor Jean-Gaspard Debureau. Debureau's interpretation of Pierrot as a mocking clown influenced the many re-creations of Pierrot

by artists, poets and musicians in the late nineteenth century. By the turn of the century Pierrot had become "the personage of pallor and silent mystery, supple and mute as a snake, tall and rigid as a gallows, that mechanical man operated by strange strings..."¹ One of the poets influenced by this concept of Pierrot was Albert Giraud who published a collection of fifty poems entitled Pierrot Lunaire in 1884. George Perle describes Giraud's Pierrot as a "decadent version of the romanticized clown" with "characteristic motifs of...the painted dandy, hallucinatory landscapes, religious--and sacreligious--ecstasies."² These characteristics of Pierrot were made even clearer by Otto Erich Hartleben whose free translations of these poems were used by Schoenberg for his Pierrot melodramas.

Another of the theatrical people having a personal identification with Pierrot was Mme. Zehme. Eduard Steuermann describes her as an "actress who still had artistic ambitions and some strange ideas, including the identification of herself with the character of Pierrot."³ Mme. Zehme initially approached a composer named Frieslander to set the Hartleben translations of Giraud's poems as recitations, and she subsequently performed these settings on tours around Germany. However, whether through her own dissatisfaction or the encouragement of friends, she eventually approached Schoenberg to reset them for her. In considering the role of the reciter in "Pierrot Lunaire" it is helpful to bear in mind that Mme. Zehme was not a trained musician, but an actress, highly experienced in melodramatic recitation but "only as musical as the well-bred

German ladies of the time."⁴

Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" is a magical and fascinating work in many respects. Its use of devices such as canon and passacaglia, contrapuntal intricacies, motivic and non-motivic formal procedures, and rhythmic associations are all notable. The highly individualistic text-setting given to each piece is remarkable. Though each of the twenty-one poems has repeated lines of text--lines 1 and 2 are repeated as lines 7 and 8 and line 1 is again repeated as line 13--the musical settings of these repeated lines are always different. The chamber ensemble is unique in itself, being actually a quintet with three players expected to double on another instrument, yielding a large number of instrumental combinations. A different instrumental group is used in each piece. From the standpoint of the performers, the work is one of immense difficulties. Technical and musical demands are numerous, such as rhythmic complexities and a wide variety of register, color and tempo. The solving of these problems has been a challenge to many musicians, and artists of the highest calibre have been involved in performances of "Pierrot Lunaire."

The character and position of "Pierrot Lunaire" in the history of music is summed up as follows by Pierre Boulez.

Whatever the...nature of this work--both on the level of the language and on that of the esthetic that it implies--it is nonetheless true that one finds oneself in the presence of a musical fact that is uniquely successful...That unique character, finally justifies the privileged--and as if symbolic--role that has been conferred upon "Pierrot Lunaire" in the evolution of musical writing.⁵

With "Pierrot Lunaire", *Sprechstimme* was established as a style of vocal production--one that would be used in various ways by composers of the twentieth century. Understanding *Sprechstimme* and its interpretation has consequently become a necessity for singers who wish to maintain a comprehensive view of singing and vocal repertoire. A study of *Sprechstimme* revolves around "Pierrot Lunaire" for a number of reasons: 1) "Pierrot Lunaire" was the first work to unite totally the inflected speaking voice with its musical background; 2) it is the only solo vocal work entirely in *Sprechstimme*; 3) Schoenberg was meticulous in putting in directions which assist the reciter; 4) many recordings of the work are available for comparative study.

Schoenberg gives the following directions for the performance of *Sprechstimme* in the foreword of "Pierrot Lunaire."

The melody given for the speaking voice in notes (apart from a few specifically indicated exceptions) is not meant to be sung. The reciter has the task of transforming it, with a thorough regard for the prescribed intervals, into a speech-melody (*Sprechmelodie*). This is accomplished in the following ways.

1. The rhythm must be kept absolutely strict, as with singing; i.e. with no more freedom than would be allowed for a song melody.

2. The difference between a singing-tone and a speaking-tone must be fully realized: the singing-tone holds fast to the pitch from beginning to end of a note, whereas the speaking-tone does give it at first, but then at once departs from it by either rising or falling. The performer must, however, watch carefully not to fall into a 'singing' way of speaking. That is not what is meant at all. However, neither must a realistic-natural speech be striven for. On the contrary, the difference between ordinary speech and a speech that is incorporated in a musical form should be clear.

In addition the following should be said concerning performance:

The performer does not have the task of bringing out the mood and character of the individual pieces through the perception of the words, but exclusively through the music. Inasmuch as the composer considered tone-painting of the events and feelings given in the text to be called for, it will be found in the music. Where the performer does not find it, he must beware of adding something that the composer did not intend. That would not be an addition, but a subtraction.⁶

The inflections of a *Sprechmelodie* are not easily grasped, especially since Schoenberg's instructions are easily misunderstood. Erwin Stein has provided this helpful elaboration.

While in ordinary talk the sound of most syllables consists in a simple drop of the voice from a hardly perceptible pitch, elevated speech dwells for a moment (about a tenth of a second: in music we know our way about small fractions of a second) on the initial note and then glides sonorously, quasi glissando, downwards or upwards according to the expression required--but as a rule downwards. These initial notes are fixed by the notation of the reciter's part in "Pierrot."⁷

This statement combined with an understanding of elevated speech (discussed in the preceding chapter) gives a relatively clear picture of the style required.

Constant awareness of the unity of the voice and music in "Pierrot Lunaire" is most important to the reciter. Careful attention to inflection is vital

since the kinds of inflections given to the reciter are often mirrored by musical shapes in the instrumental ensemble...The reciter may even, from time to time share in the exposition of musical themes and in structural repetitions and variations.⁸

Schoenberg himself is careful to point out that all of the interpretive material the reciter requires is found in the music.

Eduard Steuermann, who was responsible for the initial preparation of "Pierrot Lunaire" with Mme. Zehme, has pointed out that Schoenberg does not use the voice as it was frequently used in melodrama.

The difference is that the word is not "adapted" to the music, nor is the music used to "dramatize" the word, but the speaking is an integral part of the music, "musizieren mit Worten."⁹

Since "Pierrot Lunaire" is not meant to be sung, how closely must the reciter come to all the pitches? Though Schoenberg wanted a "thorough regard for the prescribed intervals"¹⁰, these intervals should be interpreted as specific direction and range of vocal inflection, but not as specific pitches. The comparative study which appears in William Austin's Music in the Twentieth Century is shown in Example 6.¹¹ This example contrasts the actual pitches indicated by Schoenberg with the recorded renditions of four singers.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Der kranke Mond" (No. 7) from Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire". At the top is the original notation by Schoenberg, which is a single melodic line with lyrics in German and English. Below this are four separate staves, each representing a different singer's rendition of the same piece. The lyrics are: "blei-ches, qual-ge-bor-nes Blut, du näc-htig to - des-kan-ker Mond! / ghast-ly, pain-be-got-ten blood, you twi-lit, death - ly fee - ble moon!". The singers listed are Siedry-Wagner, Seniser, Howland, and Pilarczyk. Each staff shows how the singer's pitch inflection differs from the original notation.

Example 6. Comparison of Pitch Inflection in "Pierrot Lunaire." "Der kranke Mond" (No. 7), mm. 25-27. in William Austin, Music in the Twentieth Century. p. 199.

As can be seen, only three pitches are actually those of the score, but the patterns of inflection are quite similar. The tessitura of the last phrase in three of the four examples is lower than that of the first phrase while Schoenberg has written them as identical.

An earlier study was done by Wilhelm Heinitz in 1925 comparing accuracy to the score in renditions by two interpreters of "Pierrot Lunaire," referred to only as subject B and subject M.¹² Heinitz compared four aspects of their performances: 1) deviation of pitch measured in half-steps (Table I); 2) similarity of phrase movement (Table II); 3) total interval compass measured in half-steps (Table III); and 4) range (Table IV). His results are reproduced below.

Subject	% with attack on original pitch	Percentage of Deviation from Original measured in half-steps			
		2/2 steps	4/2 steps	6/2 steps	more than 6/2 steps
B	5.5	25.3	34.6	11.2	23.4
M	12.1	42.4	23.3	13.9	8.3

Table I. Comparison of pitch deviation in two performances of "Pierrot Lunaire."

Subject	% Counter movement*	% Opposite Phrase Movement	% Similar Phrase Movement
B	24.3	10.3	65.4
M	6.2	12.4	81.4

* Not changing pitches when indicated, or re-iterating pitch when change was indicated.

Table II. Similarity of phrase movement in two performances of "Pierrot Lunaire."

Total Half-step Movement	Original	Subject B	Subject M
	380	360	384

Table III. Comparison of total interval compass in two performances of "Pierrot Lunaire."

Total Compass in 1/2 steps	Original	Subject B	Subject M
	24	13	22
Pitch Range	$f^{\circ} - f^2$	$h^{\circ} - c^2$	$a^{\circ} - g^2$

Table IV. Comparison of total range in two performances of "Pierrot Lunaire."

If the accuracy of pitch, range and phrase movement are the criteria for effective *Sprechstimme*, subject B's interpretation should be considered 'better'. However, when Schoenberg himself was asked to listen to the renditions and give his opinion as to which was the better interpretation, he selected that of subject M, who was generally freer in her interpretation of the material. Heinitz's conclusion was that the speech-melody problems in "Pierrot Lunaire" were not scientific but artistic.¹³

Sprechstimme must convey the aural impression of spoken voice even at the expense of deviation from the printed score. As long as the production is basically spoken, the interpretation will be fairly accurate. Alan Lessem has pointed out that:

This technique of inflectional...variation...is intrinsic to the speaking-voice; it allows the voice a wide scope in realizing changes of tone and is especially effective when applied to repetitions of lines in the poem, while at the same time ensuring a close coordination between it and the instrumental ensemble.¹⁴

The full effect of well-executed *Sprechstimme* is summed up well by Pierre Boulez.


I am obliged to recognize the sound-influence and indisputable efficacy of the climate of that work "Pierrot Lunaire"...The true immediate emotion seems to me to result from the use of *Sprechstimme*; in conformity with the first destination of the work, if one frankly gives the diction of the text its full value without, for that reason, neglecting the perfect justice of the spoken intervals, the possibility results of being at ease in the tempo indicated and in a tessitura that at first glance may seem difficult or even inaccessible. One has a sensation of the natural: when the instrumental ensemble takes preponderance, the voice, located on a different (acoustic) level, does not have to struggle violently in the same (musical) domain.¹⁵

Chapter 3

SPRECHSTIMME SINCE SCHOENBERG

The use of *Sprechstimme* as a means of effective text-setting has continued. Schoenberg often used it in his later works. However, never again did he use the same type of *Sprechstimme* called for in "Pierrot Lunaire." In Moses und Aron and Die Jakobsleiter he notated the speaking voice the way Humperdinck had, with *Sprechnoten*. Though the crosses occur on specific lines and spaces and often have accidentals, they are not bound to the intervallic relationships as they were in "Pierrot Lunaire." In the "Ode to Napoleon" and "A Survivor from Warsaw" Schoenberg became even freer in his notation, using only one line to represent the staff with the pitches to be recited lying on, above or below the line. In a letter to Rene Leibowitz he wrote:

This *Sprechstimme* is not to be as musically produced as in my other, more rigorous compositions. It should never be sung, never should an actual pitch be recognizable.¹

Even as Schoenberg's own notation for the speaking voice became less precise, that of his pupil, Alban Berg, became increasingly precise. In his operas Wozzeck and Lulu a new notational symbol is introduced by Berg. This is a note with the notehead of traditional notation, but a single diagonal crosses the stem (). The indication given for these notes is *halb gesungen*--half sung.

In the preface to Lulu Berg writes that the text is to be interpreted in six ways.² Examples 7-11 show how these six

types of text-setting appear in score.

1) Unaccompanied dialogue.

lächelnd



Be - feh - len?

Der Maler (Pinsel, Palette und einige Briefe in der Hand) tritt von rechts ein



E - va!

Die Post ist gekommen.

Lulu: (wieder ernst, wie ernüchtert) So?!

Maler: (die Briefe sortierend, ihr einen reichend) An Dich.

Lulu: (führt das Billet zur Nase) Die Corticelli. (birgt es an ihrem Busen)

Maler: (einen Brief durchfliegend) Dein Bild als „Tänzerin“ verkauft – für 50.000 Mark!

Lulu: Wer schreibt denn das?

Maler: Der Kunsthändler in Paris. Das ist das dritte Bild seit unserer Verheiratung. Ich weiß mich vor meinem Glück kaum zu retten.

Lulu: (auf die Briefe deutend) Da kommt noch mehr.

Maler: (eine Verlobungsanzeige öffnend) Sieh da! (geht sie Lulu)

Lulu: (liest) „Herr Regierungsrat Heinrich Ritter von Zarnikow beehrt sich, Ihnen von der Verlobung seiner Tochter Charlotte Marie Adelaide mit Herrn — Dr. Ludwig Schön ergebenst Mitteilung zu machen.“

Maler: (während er andere Briefe öffnet) Endlich! Es ist ja eine Ewigkeit, daß er darauf lossteuert, sich vor der Welt zu verloben. Ich begreife nicht, ein Gewaltmensch von seinem Einfluß! Was steht denn eigentlich seiner Heirat im Wege? (nachdem Lulu nichts sagt, die Briefe zusammenfallend) Jedenfalls müssen wir heute noch gratulieren.

Lulu: Das haben wir doch längst getan.

Maler: Seiner Braut wegen!

Lulu: Du kannst es ihm ja noch einmal schreiben.

Maler: Und jetzt zur Arbeit. (nimmt Pinsel und Palette, die er weggelegt hatte, küßt Lulu, geht links die Stufen hinauf, wendet sich aber in der Portiera um)

Poco Lento (♩ = ca 54)

Pk.



lächelnd

Lulu



Be - feh - len?

M.



E - va!

Kb.



Example 7. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, mm. 414-415 and dialogue.

2) Free prose (accompanied).

bedäufzig *p* *f*

Menschen auf dieser Welt angehöre, gehöre ich Ihnen. Ohne Sie wäre ich— ich will nicht sagen, wo Sie ha-ben mich bei der

pp *p* *mf* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Example 8. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, mm. 617-619.

3) Rhythmically correctly spoken and stems without noteheads.

poco cresc. *poco f*

Hand ge-nom-men, mir zu es-sen ge-ge-ben, mich klei-den las-sen, als ich Ih-nen die Uhr steh-len woll-te

poco accel. *rit.*

pp *pp* *p* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Example 9. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, mm. 620-621.

4) *Sprechstimme* in high, middle and low range. Notes with crosses on the stems.



Example 10. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, m.3

5) Half-sung: Notes with a single diagonal beam through the stem.



Example 11. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, m.4

6) Entirely sung: with normal throat.

These six types of voice production are used not only in isolation but also as a means of transition, giving a different kind of intensity to the voice. In Example 12 the voice moves from free prose with accompaniment (type 2), through rhythmically spoken words (type 3) to *Sprechstimme* (type 4).



Example 12. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, mm. 623-624.

In another instance Berg moves from *Sprechstimme* (type 4) through half-sung production (type 5) into singing (type 6) all within the space of one bar. In this instance he gives an additional instruction above the notes--*vom Sprechen Übergehen ins Singen* (mezzo voce)--from speech changing into singing (half voice). Here the voice is not meant to utilize three different types of production, but to realize a continuum between speaking and singing.



Example 13. Alban Berg, Lulu. Act I, Scene 1, mm. 439-440.

Since 1940, *Sprechstimme* has undergone no basic changes. What has occurred is its incorporation within a large body of literature for the voice as a means of text-setting extremely useful in creating contrast.

A fine example of the contrast that can be attained by the use of *Sprechstimme* occurs in George Crumb's "Ancient Voices of Children" (1970). The third movement is notable in the way varying vocal production accentuates the meaning of the text. The complete poem and translation, divided into the form it takes in the music and showing the varying types of voice production are given on the following page.

Though Crumb has set the poem in a cyclical manner, by beginning each section of the recurring patterns with *Sprechstimme* instead of a recognizable tune he has avoided the aural impression of a strophic song. The *Sprechstimmen* also lend dramatic impetus to the question and answer exchanges between the soprano and boy soprano in the A sections, utilizing carefully dictated rhythmic precision but allowing the dramatic impact of spoken inflection. The fully spoken voice is given extra dramatic force by occurring in isolation between moments of complete silence, totally separate from the music. The listener cannot help but pay special attention to these spoken sections which are the key lines of the text.

In a discussion of *Sprechstimme*, Pierre Boulez has written:

Here we are in the presence of one of the most valid means of vocal expression which has ever been used to terminate that boring discussion...about the relative primacy of pure singing as a recognized convention and of singing reproducing the inflections of the spoken language as faithfully as possible:...That incorporation of the spoken language into the sung language is the only solution envisageable, it seems to me, for certain especially difficult enigmas involved in the superimposition of poem and music.³

A₁--SprechstimmeSoprano: *De dónde vienes, amor, mi niño?*

From where do you come, my love, my child:

Child: *De la cresta del águila frío.*

From the ridge of hard frost.

Soprano: *Que necesistas, amor, mi niño?*

What do you need, my love, my child?

Child: *La tibia tela de tu vestido*

The warm cloth of your dress.

B₁--Oboe CadenzaC₁--SungSoprano: *Que se agiten las ramas al sol*Let the branches rustle in the sun
Y salten las fuentes alvedador!
And the fountains leap all around!

THREE SECOND PAUSE

D₁--SpokenChild: *En el patio ladaya el perro.*In the courtyard a dog barks,
en los arboles canta el viento.
In the trees the wind sings.

Los bueyes magen al bueyero

The oxen low to the ox-herd
y la luna me rísa los cabellos

And the moon curls my hair.

THREE SECOND PAUSE

F₁--Electric PianoA₂--SprechstimmeSoprano: *Que pides, niño, donde tan lejoso?*

What do you ask for, my child, from so far away?

Child: *Los blancas montes que hay en tu pecho.*

The white mountains of your breast.

B₂--Oboe CadenzaC₂--SungSoprano: *Que se agiten las ramas al sol*Let the branches rustle in the sun
y salten las fuentes alvedador!
and the fountains leap all around!

THREE SECOND PAUSE

D₂--SpokenSoprano: *Te diré, niño mío, que sí,*I'll tell you my child, yes,
tronchada y rota soy para ti.I am torn and broken for you.
Como me duele esta cinturaHow painful is this waist
donde tendras primera cuna!

Where you will have your first cradle!

THREE SECOND PAUSE

E₂--Electric PianoA₃--SprechstimmeSoprano: *Cuando, mi niño, vas a venir?*

When, my child, will you come?

Child: *Cuando tu carne huele a jazmín.*

When your flesh smells of jasmine-flowers.

B₃--Oboe CadenzaC₃--SungSoprano: *Que se agiten las ramas al sol*Let the branches rustle in the sun
y salten las fuentes alvedador!
and the fountains leap all around!

García Lorca, "De donde vienes, amor, mi niño?": Form and vocal usage in George Crumb's
"Ancient Voices of Children."

In his cycle "Le Marteau sans Maître," Boulez has used *Sprechstimme* in precisely this way. Actually three cycles within one, each of the three poems is an integral part of the separate cycles, and the voice is handled differently in each. The separate cycles are:

I: "l'Artisanat furieux":

avant "l'Artisanat furieux"--instrumental

"l'Artisanat furieux"--voice and solo flute

après "l'Artisanat furieux"--instrumental

II: "Bourreaux de solitude":

Commentaire I de "Bourreaux de solitude"--
instrumental

Commentaire II de "Bourreaux de solitude"--
instrumental

"Bourreaux de solitude":--voice and instrumental
ensemble

Commentaire III de "Bourreaux de solitude"--
instrumental

III: "Bel edifice et les pressentiments":

First version

'Double' version

Boulez has given the following commentary on each of the three:

"L'Artisanat" is a linear piece in the sense that the voice is handled in a direct manner...The poem is sung without interruption in an unaffected style accompanied only by the flute...The poem is always in the foreground.

"Bel edifice et les pressentiments" is handled differently. The poem serves to articulate the most important portion within the overall form. The influence of the vowels remains great; the voice has no greater pre-eminence than before: it is made contentious by its instrumental surroundings.

"Bourreaux de solitude" loosens these restrictions in a consummate compositional-unity between the voice and the instruments: both are tied to one another through the same musical structure: the voice is periodically lifted over the ensemble to deliver the text.

Finally the 'double' version of "Bel edifice" brings a last metamorphosis in the role of the voice; when the last words of the text are concluded, the voice goes--with closed mouth--into the instrumental ensemble and gives up its individual capacity: the articulation of the words done, it sinks back into anonymity, while the flute ...assumes the foreground and takes over the role of the vocal element.

The work employs the various means of vocal sound production from singing to speaking. Always, according to the demands of the setting, the singing maintains its decorative influence and the speaking its dramatic effectiveness.⁴

In this work the dramatic effect of the voice is handled in a cumulative manner. The actual form of the complete cycle and the required vocal production appears below.⁵

1. *avant* "l'Artisanat furieux"
2. *Commentaire I de* "Bourreaux de solitude"
3. "l'Artisanat furieux"--sung: in practice one long vocalize.⁶
4. *Commentaire II de* "Bourreaux de solitude"
5. "Bel edifice et les pressentiments": First version--mainly sung with several words of *Sprechstimme*.
6. "Bourreaux de solitude"--sung
7. *apres* "l'Artisanat furieux"
8. *Commentaire III de* "Bourreaux de solitude"
9. "Bel edifice et les pressentiments": 'Double' version--*Sprechstimme*, singing, humming.

Figure 1 is a graph by Stockhausen of the vocal element in the 'double' version of "Bel edifice et les pressentiments."⁷ This graph provides a visual depiction of Boulez's "metamorphosis in the role of the voice."⁸ The lowest line represents the voice in its most recognizable form--free speech (*parlando libre*). The top line represents the vocal element as pure music, assumed here by the alto flute. Intermediate stages include *Sprechstimme* (*quasi parlando*), syllabic and melismatic singing, and humming (*bouche fermée*) in varying dynamic balance with the instrumental ensemble.

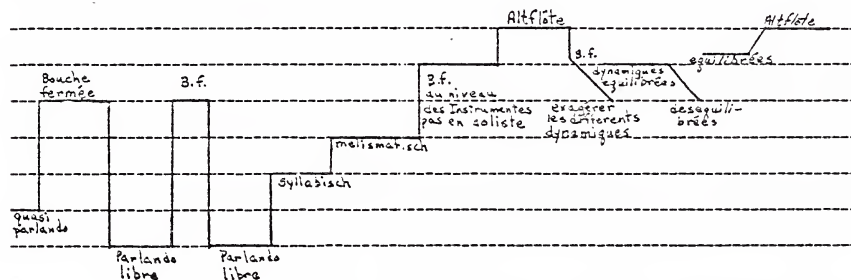


Figure 1. The Vocal Element in "Bel edifice et les pressentiments," 'double' version by Pierre Boulez. Visual representation by Karlheinz Stockhausen in Die Reihe 6:46.

Stockhausen also adds the following comment:

Here there is no longer any point in discussing speech and music; one should rather talk of the transition from speech to music.⁹

A summation of the vocal use in "Le Marteau sans Maître" is provided by Klüppelholz.

The path from instrumentally melismatic to instrumental *bouche fermée* singing at the end of the last vocal segment goes through speech; Boulez closes, so to speak, the circle between speech and music.¹⁰

Chapter 4

THE VOCAL DELIVERY OF *SPRECHSTIMME*

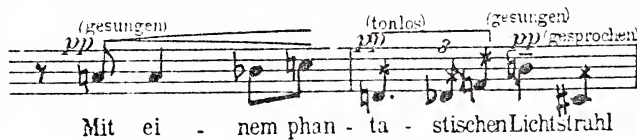
While the transitions from speech to music or from singing to speaking can be envisaged in the ear of the composer and roughly translated through notation onto paper, it is only through the efforts of the performer that they can be realized aurally. The interpretive aspects of vocal delivery to be discussed here are not limited to *Sprechstimme* though they are written with that specific technique in mind.

Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme* in "Pierrot Lunaire" is the most precisely notated of all musical examples studied. Therefore, once the notation of "Pierrot Lunaire" is understood, the interpretation of this vocal device becomes reasonably easy to translate from one work to another.

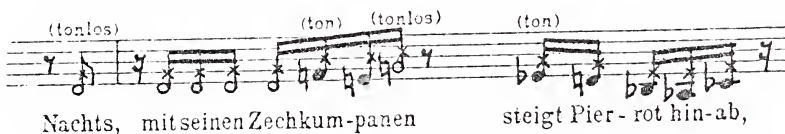
Throughout "Pierrot Lunaire" Schoenberg uses a combination of standard and non-standard notation. The notes which occur in standard notation are to be fully sung and are also marked *gesungen* (sung). For these notes the problem for the reciter is executing the shift from speaking to singing and back to speaking. Since sung tones are of different durations and occur at different pitches, the ability to shift between singing and speaking depends upon the technical facility of the individual performer. Comparative listening to the available recordings indicates that difficulties are more apt to arise in returning to speech following singing rather than returning to singing following speech. In all but two of the

performances examined at least one more note is sung following the indication to resume speaking.

At the opposite end of the vocal spectrum is whispering. The notation for whispering varies from piece to piece but is always accompanied with the instruction *tonlos* (toneless) or *tonlos geflüstert* (tonelessly whispered). Since the notation changes, the interpreter must rely on the written instruction rather than the notated one. As with sung notes, Schoenberg gives little time for the vocal adjustment but he does write in assistance that could be easily overlooked. These are chiefly in the form of softer dynamics more compatible with whispering, and changes in register. Both are shown in Examples 14 and 15.



Example 14. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 3): "Der Dandy", mm. 16-17.



Example 15. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 10): "Raub", mm. 8-9.

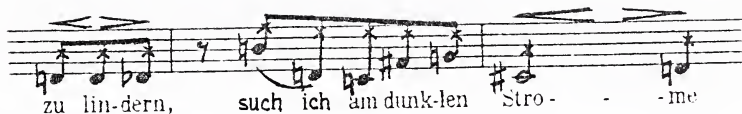
Just as Schoenberg was careful to note in the foreword that the performer is not to add anything to the music, care should be taken to use all of the given musical elements as aids to production

and interpretation.

Apart from the few examples of singing or whispering, the work is in *Sprechstimme*. The notation for this is similar to standard notation with an 'x' through the stem. As has already been mentioned, the intervals should be observed as closely as possible without departing from the impression of speech.

It is generally agreed that a brief slide or glissando follows every note in *Sprechstimme*, this being the natural result of non-sustained vowel production inherent in speech. The changes in this glissando-like departure from individual pitches are determined by a number of things, some notated and some not. The effect of metrical duration on the slide is the most frequently encountered. When the text moves very quickly, as in "Galgenlied" (No. 12), the slide is practically inaudible, since the succeeding vowel must be articulated so rapidly. In instances where the vowel occurs on longer notes or at a slower tempo, the slide takes on a quasi-portamento sound.

In addition to the general rise and fall of speaking inflection, Schoenberg has notated a number of slurs. These slurs require a stronger sustaining of the vowel and are very similar to the true vocal portamento in sound. In nearly all cases these slurs occur within one word on one vowel, and serve to enhance the agogic accent of the word. However in some places the slurs connect different vowel sounds and these require a different interpretation. Example 16 shows a case in point.



Example 16. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 2): "Colombine", mm. 17-19.

In this example the portamento from the word *such* to *ich* emphasizes the word that receives the main accent in the phrase. Without the slur that elongates and strengthens the vowel on *such*, the accent would almost inevitably fall on the word *ich* due to the change of register and its metrical position.

Another, more difficult slur is shown in Example 17.



Example 17. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 3): "Der Dandy", m. 8.

This slur is a particularly confusing one. Not only does the slur connect two words, it is accompanied by a crescendo. The most difficult problem however, is that it connects a whispered word with a spoken one. The problem is complicated by the presence of the 'sch' consonant combination on the end of *Waschtisch*, and the length and speed of the following phrase. The undesirability of a breath in this instance is the only obvious feature here, since both the crescendo and the slur clearly indicate no break in the phrase. A

A number of interpretations may be tried.

1. Whisper *Waschtisch* and crescendo on the last sibilant. Then begin speaking on the word *des*. This eliminates the rising pitch inflection.

2. Phonate *Waschtisch* utilizing a breathy production to create an effect reminiscent of whispering, raise the pitch on the 'i' vowel, adding the 'sch' quickly before the word *des*. This compromises Schoenberg's *tonlos geflüstert* instruction in the score.

3. Whisper *Waschtisch* and crescendo on 'sch'. Begin phonation of the word *des* slightly before the beat. It is impossible to do this since 'd' is a voiced plosive consonant. What actually occurs is that the tongue assumes the 'd' position against the roof of the mouth. When this position is phonated an 'n' is produced. The resulting word is n-*des*, but unless it is extremely exaggerated the aural perception of the word is *des*. This is the technique used by the performers on record who do not breathe after *Waschtisch*.

Interestingly, nearly all the singers on the recordings studied breathe after *Waschtisch*. Here again the individual performer's technical ability is the sole determining factor in the interpretation.

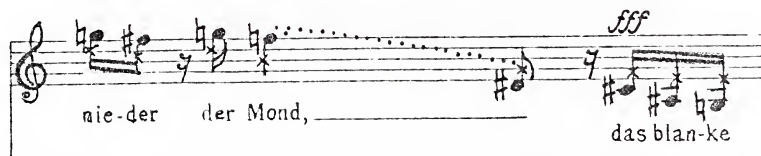
A particularly interesting example of Schoenberg's use of slurs is shown in Example 18.



Example 18. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 7): "Der kranke Mond", mm. 24-25.

This example is similar to Example 16 with the portamentos producing an exaggerated agogic accent. The identity of the rhythm, accent and portamento-effect in these two bars, plus the direction *im Ton genau so wie der vorhergehende Takt* (in sound exactly as that of the preceding bar) draws attention to these two measures. The desired effect is tied to the text and is a '*belustig Spiel*' by Schoenberg to doubly enhance the meaning of the text.¹ This is one place in the score where a 'sing-song' effect in the *Sprechstimme* would be appropriate.

In addition to the slurs and their portamento production, there are examples of written glissandi which must be even more exaggerated. One of these is shown in Example 19.



Example 19. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 13): "Enthauptung", mm. 20-21.

Though no instructions occur in the voice part, the instrumental parts employ a similar notation and are marked *gliss*. It can be assumed that the voice should imitate the effect produced by the instruments.

Examples 20, 21, and 22 show another type of glissando that occurs in three other instances.²



Example 20. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 9): "Gebet an Pierrot", mm. 9-10.



Example 21. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 11): "Rote Messe", mm. 11-12.



Example 22. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 15): "Heimweh", mm. 8-9.

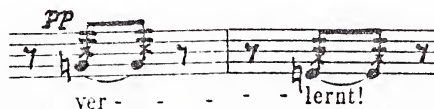
The glissando in Example 20 can be interpreted two ways. If the notation is interpreted as following vocal tradition, a trill

would accompany the descending pitch. In this case the staccato markings would indicate a rearticulation of the trill when the pitches and vowel change. If the notation is interpreted from an instrumental standpoint, it is merely an exaggerated gliding between the pitches. In that case the staccato markings would mean to impart definite articulation to the pitch and vowel while sustaining the impression of a glissando. The latter interpretation is the one most often heard on recordings.

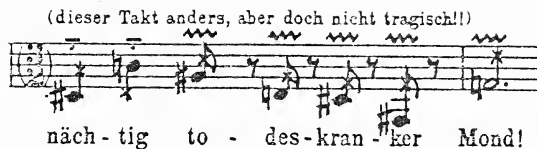
Example 21 yields a siren-like wail. This can be its only interpretation since it covers such a wide range at triple forte for only an eighth-note's duration.

The glissando seen in Example 22 is again an exaggerated glide between the pitches, only this time the second pitch should be articulated higher than the end of the glide from the first note, and continue downward to the third pitch.

Important to the interpretation of the *Sprechstimme* in "Pierrot Lunaire" are the examples of accent, ornamentation and dynamics that occur, as well as the written instructions that are seen throughout the work. While the accents and dynamics are very clear in meaning, the ornaments are difficult to interpret. Schoenberg has used two different notations, seen in Examples 23 and 24.



Example 23. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 9): "Gebet an Pierrot", mm. 11-12.



Example 24. "Pierrot Lunaire" (No. 7): "Der kranke Mond", mm. 26-27.

The ornament in Example 24 looks like a trill and the one in Example 23 like a tremolo. The difficulty arises in the application of these techniques to speech. The second ornament, the tremolo, is not difficult in speech and is probably what Schoenberg intended on the word *verlernt* (forgotten). Laughing is articulated in the same way as the tremolo or trillo and would easily fit the ironic nature of the "Gebet an Pierrot" (No. 9). The trill, however, is very difficult in speech. The trill is executed with a free larynx that is able to fluctuate rapidly causing the change in pitch. The trillo, on the contrary, is articulated on one pitch with a more constricted larynx. Because of this technical difficulty, the interpretation of this bar has as many variations as there are performances. The sounds produced for this bar are generally those of the trillo, ranging in performance from the sound of a normal voice, to that of an extremely constricted one resembling the sound of a 'death rattle', to those of an actual trill by performers who can do so in such a low register. Schoenberg's direction is *dieser takt anders, aber doch nicht tragisch* (this bar is to be different, but still not tragic).

The dynamic range of "Pierrot Lunaire" is as broad as the pitch range, going from triple piano to triple forte. Almost without exception, the middle and lower voice are marked at a level of mezzo-piano or lower. Attention to Schoenberg's dynamics can alleviate the need to push the chest register to high dynamic levels. Most of the forte singing is in the upper register where the speaking voice more closely approximates the production of singing and projects more easily over an instrumental ensemble. Therefore, while the dynamic and range requirements are formidable, they are approachable because of their positioning within the score.

The dramatic effect of *Sprechstimme* cannot be overstated. Because it utilizes techniques of both song and speech, it incorporates the wide variety of colors of which the human voice is capable. The comprehensibility of the text is increased because of its similarity to speech, yet because it also resembles song, the composer has the liberty to elongate certain vowels and syllables or pitch the words so range and tessitura contribute to dramatic effect.

Emotion is a large factor in the coloring of the voice, and by indicating emotions to be projected the composer can also draw from the performer the vocal color he wishes. Thus we see Schoenberg giving directions such as *ärgerlich* (annoyed or exasperated), *äusserst zart* (extremely gentle or tender), *ernst* (earnestly), and *komisch bedeutsam* (comically significant). Crumb uses directions such as "eager", "exuberant", and "hard". A correlation between

emotional color and text is given by Ms. Mabry in discussing the role of the reciter in "Pierrot Lunaire".

An overly bright color is appropriate for those texts which are overtly happy or gay...The very darkest tone quality may be used for texts that are gruesome, gloomy or mysterious...Eventually...the reciter can concentrate on slight variations of color to enhance specific words.³

While the preceding discussion of *Sprechstimme* has dealt with the problems in "Pierrot Lunaire" it should not be assumed that the examples either may or may not occur in other works. A similar listing could be compiled for each work employing *Sprechstimme*. One of the most fascinating aspects of this device is the seemingly unending variety that can be achieved when the speaking and singing voices are combined. Even the utilization of similar techniques yields vastly different results both from composers and performers.

By combining all of the emotional colorations within the capabilities of the voice with other vocal effects such as whispering, shouting and wailing, *Sprechstimme* can create an aura unlike any other vocal technique. It is this uniqueness of aura that lies behind its development and justifies its development as a part of every singer's full technique.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of *Sprechstimme* as a means of vocal production encompasses a span of over two hundred years. Its origins can be traced to early melodrama where the alternation of spoken recitation and musical interludes was used to intensify dramatic action. Spoken text and music were gradually incorporated until melodrama had become dramatic recitation over a musical background. Paralleling these changes were a number of notational systems, developed to provide as clear a representation of the composer's intentions as possible. These systems dealt mainly with juxtaposition of words and music. However, the development of highly inflected theatrical speech inspired composers to notate the inflectional compass they desired as well.

The integration of speech and music reached a zenith in the works of Arnold Schoenberg which express the text as inflected speech. Through these compositions *Sprechstimme* became established as an independent vocal technique. Moreover, it has been seen by generations of composers coming after him as a generic concept of great breadth.

Though the concept of *Sprechstimme* has remained basically unchanged since Schoenberg, the use of spoken voice in musical works is still evolving. While *Sprechstimme* continues to be used in sung works to lend dramatic impact to the text, the device is also used to express an intermediate area of sound between spoken language and music. In addition, it has become a point of

departure for many works using a greatly expanded gamut of vocally-produced sounds.

The study and development of this technique not only illuminates an interesting segment of the history of song, but affords a means of approach to the steadily increasing body of new vocal literature.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Paul Griffiths, "Sprechgesang," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 18:27.

2. Ralph W. Wood, "Concerning 'Sprechgesang'," Tempo 17:4.

3. Edward F. Kravitt, "The Joining of Words and Music in Late Romantic Melodrama." Musical Quarterly 62:571.

4. Ibid., p. 585.

5. The component parts of this definition are: "*Sprechstimme* is a technique of vocal performance that lies between speech and song." from "Sprechgesang, Sprechstimme" in John Vinton, Dictionary of Contemporary Music (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974) p. 704; "It consists of recitation on higher or lower pitches," from "Sprechstimme, Sprechgesang," in Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U. Press, 1969), p. 805; The remainder is based on the definition given by Milton Babbitt in "An Introduction to the Music," record notes for Moses und Aron (Columbia Records), p. 15.

6. Peter Branscombe, "Melodrama," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 12:116.

7. J. Van der Veen, Le Melodrame Musical de Rousseau au Romantisme (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), p. 11.

8. Ibid., p. 8.

9. Ibid., p. 105.

10. Ibid., p. 107.

11. Though Richard Strauss is better known for his non-melodramatic works, he was not only a composer of melodrama, but also an active participant in its performance. He served many times as the pianist for his own Enoch Arden. Max von Schillings was a German composer and conductor. Though not very prolific, his melodrama "Das Hexenlied" was a very popular theatre piece at the end of the nineteenth century.

12. Edward F. Kravitt, "The Influence of Theatrical Declamation Upon Composers of the Late Romantic Lied," Acta Musicologica 34:19.

13. Ibid., p. 18.

14. Kravitt, "Joining of Words," p. 585.
15. Ibid.
16. Wilhelm Kienzl, Die Musikalische Deklamation (Leipzig: Verlag von Heinrich Matthes, 1885), Anhang II. passim.
17. Kravitt, "Joining of Words," p. 584. The Grove's edition referred to is the second.
18. Kienzl, Deklamation, p. 153.
19. Richard Wagner, Opera and Drama, transl. William Ashton Ellis, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1900), p. 271.
20. Kienzl, Deklamation, p. 159.
21. Kravitt, "Joining of Words," p. 574.
22. Ibid., p. 584.
23. This example is found in Rudolf Stephan, "Zur jungsten Geschichte des Melodrama," A.M.W. 17:184.
24. Wolfram Humperdinck, Engelbert Humperdinck (Frankfurt-am-Main: Kramer, 1965), pp. 233-234.
25. Ibid., p. 238.
26. Ibid., p. 233.

Chapter 2

1. George Perle, "Pierrot Lunaire," in The Commonwealth of Music, Gustave Reese and Rose Brandel, eds. (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 307.
2. Ibid.
3. Gunther Schuller, "A Conversation with Steuermann," Perspectives of New Music 3:23.
4. Edward Steuermann, "'Pierrot Lunaire' in Retrospect," Journal of the Schoenberg Institute 2:50.
5. Pierre Boulez, "Trajectories: Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg" in Notes of an Apprenticeship, transl. Herbert Weinstock (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 261.

6. Arnold Schoenberg, Foreword of the score of "Dreimal Sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds *Pierrot Lunaire*," Op. 21. Universal Edition 5336.

7. Hans Keller, "Pierrot, An Important Record," Music Review 18 (1957):71. Quote from Erwin Stein, "The treatment of the Speaking Voice in *Pierrot Lunaire*," in Orpheus in New Guises (London, n.p., 1953).

8. Alan Lessem, "Text and Music in Schoenberg's 'Pierrot Lunaire'," Current Musicology 19:104.

9. Schuller, "Conversation," p. 25.

10. Schoenberg, "Pierrot Lunaire," Foreword.

11. William Austin, Music in the Twentieth Century (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), p. 199.

12. Wilhelm Heinitz, "Die Sprechtonbewegungen in Arnold Schoenberg's 'Pierrot Lunaire'," Vox 1 (January 1925):2.

13. Ibid., p. 3.

14. Lessem, "Text and Music," p. 104.

15. Boulez, Notes, p. 261.

Chapter 3

1. Werner Klüppelholz, Sprache als Musik (Herrenberg: Gotthard F. Doring, 1976), p. 32.

2. Alban Berg, Lulu, Universal Edition 12864, Preface. Berg refers here to the *Sprechstimme* directions in the foreword of Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire."

3. Boulez, Notes, p. 259.

4. Pierre Boulez, "Sprechen, Singen, Spielen," Melos 38:458-459.

5. The indentation used is taken from Klüppelholz, Sprache, pp. 38-39.

6. Boulez, "Sprechen," p. 459.

7. Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Music and Speech," transl. Ruth Koenig, in Die Reihe 6 (1964):46.

8. Boulez, "Sprechen," p. 459.
9. Stockhausen, "Music and Speech," p. 46.
10. Klüppelholz, Sprache, p. 41.

Chapter 4

1. The lines of text are:
 Belustigt deiner Strahlen Spiel--
 Dein bleiches, qualgebornes Blut,
 Du nächtig todeskranker Mond.
 from "Der kranke Mond" (No. 7) in "Pierrot Lunaire" mm. 24-26.
2. The term 'glissando' as used in this context refers to an exaggerated gliding between two pitches in which there is a progressively changing pitch, not a series of articulated individual pitches.
3. Sharon Mabry, "Vocal Problems in the Performance of Schoenberg's 'Pierrot Lunaire'," NATS (Jan/Feb 1979):30.

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